# How to / Trackmania / User apperance / Car shadows / Neons

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## Introduction

This is a short tutorial providing information on how to make "neons" for your **Trackmania Stadium car**. Of course you can change the shadows for your other environments' cars as well...

Note: This method only works for default Nadeo cars. It might work as well for 3D models, if the author of the model implemented handling of an extra shadowfile.. you're free to try, but don't be too disappointed if it won't work...

Remember that a car shadow can only be used within a car zip file.

## Preparations

### Software needed

Imaging software like **Photoshop, Paintshop Pro** or **Gimp**. I'm using Photoshop in this tutorial.

### File locations

I hope you're familiar with the file location tutorial already, because you will have to find & handle some files.

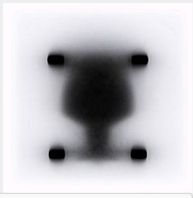
## Step 1: Find the default texture

As a source for our work, you will need to get the original shadow for the Stadium car from your Trackmania game which can be found at:
[Game Installation folder]\GameData\Vehicles\Media\Texture\Image\

The file we need is the "**StadiumCarShadowProj.dds**" ... copy this file to some temporary work folder, like "c:\temp\" or something ...

## Step 2: Open it in your graphics program

Open your copy of the DDS texture file using the graphics program you have got on your computer.



See the "**Graphic formats**" tutorial for further reference, on how to open/manipulate/save .DDS files.

Once opened, your graphic program will show you the standard shadow texture file...

### 3 additional notes

- This texture is very large, there's plenty of space to all sides to insert all sorts of things (graphics,text,whatever) in a large area around your car; Imagine the possibilities...

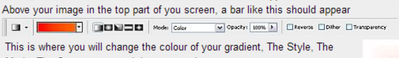
- You can see that the shadow is a bit compressed along the Y-Axis of the car... when the texture is used within the game, it will be automatically stretched.

- "White" will automatically be interpreted as "100% Transparent", so the "nearer" your shadow colour comes to white, the more transparently it will be displayed within the game..

## Step 3: Manipulate colours

Now we will change the existing black shadow to some "neon" colours...
Every graphic program has many ways to manipulate colours, you can chose what looks the best to you...
**Example in Photoshop:**

The quick and easy way to create the neon is to use the tool called **Gradient Tool**, if you cant see that, there should be a **Fill Bucket**, Click and hold on that and a submenu will appear with the **Gradient Tool** in.
Above your image in the top part of you screen, a bar like this should appear



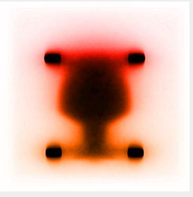

This is where you will change the colour of your gradient, The Style, The Mode, The Opaqueness and the extra options.

Let's chose some red/orange-ish gradient.

You can chose between existing gradients or create your own ones, the tool is able to create the most phantastic gradients you can use to manipulate your images.

It's important to set the "**Mode**" to "**Colour**", otherwise the tool will fill your whole screen.

After playing around a bit, you'll get something similar to what you can see on the right picture.



## Step 4: Insert text

In addition, you can insert some flashy text or graphics.

**Example in Photoshop:**

To add your name or any text to the image, Insert a new layer by either going to **layer – New Layer**, or clicking on the small symbol at the bottom of the box called **Layers.**

Now click and drag the Text Box which can be accessed by clicking on the T button on the left hand side of you screen. Then simply Type your desired text into the box and change Colour and Font until you're happy. Your neon should now look something along these lines, if not, go back and look through the guide.

If you finished like that, the text would be upside-down and the wrong way round in game, so to correct this, go to
**Edit – Transform – Rotate 180 – Flip Horizontal**.
This will bring your text the right way to work in game.

To make it so it has a transparent inside with a colour boarder, make the text itself **white**, then go to **Layer – Layer Styles – Stroke**. Then just edit the colour of the boarder and the size to what you would like.

Now your neon should be nearly ready and should look like in the right picture.

## Step 5: Finalising

**Now you can save your work.**
If your graphic program supports loading/saving DDS format, then just click the "save" button.
If your graphic program doesn't support the DDS format, save your file as ".bmp" (windows bitmap) and then use the "DDS Converter" utitility to convert the .bmp file to .dds.

The shadow file can be saved with "**DXT1a**" compression, leave all other values at default.

The end is near ! Rename your freshly saved .DDS file to **ProjShad.dds**. It is now ready to be put into your custom car Zip file. Open this Zip and drag the ProjShad.dds file into it.

Re-chose your custom car zip file in the "Profile" section in TM and if you did everything right, your car shadow will now be displayed in the game...

Don't hesitate to ask questions if something doesn't work for you....



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